

speculations; and that it should mingle a certain nobleness with everything which it permitted to occupy our time. Now, how far will the discipline of modern polite literature coincide?

I should be pleased to hear a student of that literature seriously profess that he is often and impressively reminded of futurity; and to have it shown that ideas relating to this great subject are presented in sufficient number, and in a proper manner, to produce an effect which should form a respectable proportion of the *whole* effect produced by these authors on susceptible minds. But there is no ground for expecting this satisfaction.

It is true that the idea of immortality is so exceedingly grand, that many writers of genius who have felt but little genuine interest in religion, have been led by their perception of what is sublime to introduce an allusion which is one of the most powerful means of elevating the imagination: and, in point of energy and splendour, their language has been worthy of the subject. In these instances, however, it is seldom found that the idea is presented in that light which, while displaying it prominent in its individual grandeur, shows also its extensive necessary connexion with other ideas: it appears somewhat like a majestic tower, which a traveller in some countries may find standing in a solitary scene, no longer surrounded by the great assemblage of buildings, the ample city, of which it was raised to be the centre, the strength, and the ornament. Immortality has been had recourse to in one page of an ingenious work as a single topic of sublimity, in the same manner as a magnificent phenomenon, or a brilliant achievement, has been described in another. The author's object might rather seem to have been to supply an occasional gratification to taste, than to reduce the mind and all its feelings under the dominion of a grand practical principle.

It is true also, that a graver class of fine writers, who have expressed considerable respect for religion and for Christianity, and who, though not writing systematically on morals, have inculcated high moral principles, have made references to a future state as the hope and sanction of virtue. But these references are made less frequently, and with less enforcement and emphasis, than the connexion between our present conduct and a future life must be acknowledged to claim\*